



# network JUNE 07 news



**PLUS network** The Sustainable Cities: PLUS Network is an international peer learning Network of cities sharing their experiences, expertise and tools to undertake very long term planning for urban sustainability. Please visit our website at [www.plusnetwork.org](http://www.plusnetwork.org)

## Upcoming Events

### PLUS Network 2008 Biennial Conference

The PLUS Network Steering Committee is happy to announce that the next Biennial Conference will be in Durban, South Africa from Sept 15<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup>, 2008. The program is being developed and information will be provided regularly to members.

**Soundbytes** "What we are trying to do is to keep the values we have today for the long run."

–Luis Fragomeni, Sr. Fellow PLUS Network, Curitiba, Brazil

## New Members!

The PLUS Network welcomes **Vernon** and the **Okanagan Indian Band** as the first joint community and First Nations member. The City of Vernon is using the Smart Growth approach to review their Official Community Plan. The Okanagan Indian Band aims to increase the Aboriginal voice in the community by promoting knowledge of Aboriginal culture and to ensure effective use of resources.

The City of **Regina** has also joined the Network and is sharing its experience of Shaping Regina, a 100 year community vision project. Regina will soon be developing strategies and action plans that will drive the community towards a sustainable future.

## News from Network Cities

**Saint John** Vision 2015, a multi-year project adopted by the Saint John Common Council in 2005 sets a clear course of action to align the services delivered by the City with community goals and objectives. The Council has established its role as "Leading Sustainable Growth" and will soon be adopting a set of sustainability principles to guide future decision making. A consultation is underway, led by a City Advisory Group who will review submissions and develop a 75-100 year vision statement and goals, followed by action plans for achieving those goals.



Saint John has a unique and significant commitment from the Municipal Council to align governance functions with the goals identified by the community. A new municipal governance structure will provide a common sense of purpose and direction that is aligned with organizations and groups that provide services and support in the community. From garbage collection to urban planning, from public transit to economic development, all programs and services offered by the City of Saint John will be evaluated and reported on to citizens.

### PLUS Network Professional Volunteer Placement From Vancouver to Chihuahua

Brian Riera teaches Urban Planning in Vancouver and has over 33 years experience in the field. He was recruited to work with IMPLAN (Municipal Institute of Planning) in the City of Chihuahua.

He notes: *It is not just the days of clear blue skies and toasty 31°C that make Chihuahua a big change from Vancouver. In this fast paced, prosperous and modern city, the car is definitely king. After three decades of rapid growth, Chihuahua is settling*

**NETWORK CITIES:** AUSTRALIA Adelaide • BRAZIL Curitiba • Porto Alegre • Salvador • CANADA Calgary • Edmonton • Greater Vancouver Regional District • Halifax Regional Municipality • Iqaluit • Niagara Region • Ottawa • Regina • Saint John • Vernon/ Okanagan Indian Band • Whistler • COSTA RICA San Jose • KOREA Suncheon • MEXICO Chihuahua • Colima • Matamoros • MONGOLIA Ulaanbaatar • PHILIPPINES San Fernando • ROMANIA Bucharest • SENEGAL Dakar • SOUTH AFRICA Durban • SRI LANKA Badulla • Matale • Nuwara Eliya • TANZANIA Dar es Salaam • USA Olympia

in to a less hectic increase from 730,000 in 2005 to 865,000 by 2030. But high car ownership, an under-funded public transit system, and a pronounced preference for single-family housing (about 95% at last count), mean that Chihuahua has a long road to travel to reach its goals for a more sustainable future.



Brian Riera with IMPLAN Team

*For the planners at IMPLAN where I am working for five weeks, almost every day brings new development pressures. The task occasionally must seem overwhelming. The Vancouver region has been evolving a consistent plan for over 30 years. For IMPLAN, the challenge is to turn planning policies in a new direction in a much shorter period of time. From a time when it seemed growth would overcome any difficulty, Chihuahua will now have to come to terms with the limits to its growth. Helping the planners in Chihuahua has meant describing a new picture of a more sustainable and liveable city. This is an exciting time to be a planner in Chihuahua.*

IMPLAN has been working on a citizen participatory planning process to develop an "Agreement for Sustainable Development of Chihuahua City." This document will be signed by Mayor Blanco and the IMPLAN Board Members on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

If your city is interested in either supplying or hosting a volunteer staff member for professional consultation, please contact your PLUS Network project officer.

**Durban** has started its public consultation with a survey of five "Imagine Durban" questions that will help to determine the



long-term vision and future of the community. For the next few months, city teams will present *Imagine Durban* questions to school children to obtain their input on the future of the city.

In the following weeks Durban will also get the surveys out to libraries and restaurants in the city.

*"A city is governed by elected councillors with political interests. For this reason, sometimes it takes an outsider to catalyze and initiate new ideas and processes. Durban has benefitted greatly from the services of Andrew Plunkett. His ability to observe, communicate, and live with the people of Durban, helped to lay down the beginning of "Imagine Durban", a long-term sustainable planning process that will shape our city to become a quality living environment."*

–Thomas Ferreira, Planner, Urban Strategy Corporate Services, City of Durban

**PLUS Network Youth Interns–Dar es Salaam, San Jose and Matamoros** Four CIDA funded youth interns have been hired to work in three member cities. The interns will be collaborating with the municipalities and engaging local youth groups in long-term planning. In San José, Eileen Knowles will be developing a youth visioning process for the City looking forward to the year 2050 and beyond. She will use a variety of tools and outreach methods such as surveys, public events, asset mapping and photo-visioning. Laura Beckwith will be working in Matamoros, developing a "Youth Community City Guide" as a means to engage youth. Two interns will be working in Dar es Salaam: Sara Blenkhorn will be the Assistant to the local PLUS Network Project Manager, Charles Lupilya, and will act as a resource to youth organizations, facilitate workshops and design activities to engage youth in municipal governance. Erica Lay will be the Safer Cities Youth Coordinator working at the One Stop Youth Resource Centre where she will create a Youth Friendly City Guide, promote public participation and empower young people in decision making, governance and urban development.

## Events

### Planning Conference, Kelowna Canada, April 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>

As part of the Planners Institute of British Columbia's Annual Conference, the PLUS Network ran a session called: "Long-Term Sustainability Planning: An interactive panel on lessons learned from the practitioners".

During this session, 4 member cities, Regina, Whistler, Edmonton and Calgary, presented brief overviews of their long-term planning process to an audience of over 100 urban planners from around the province. Each panellist described their unique community



Patricia Gordon (Calgary), Jeff Christiansen (Regina), Shannon Gordon (Whistler), Heather McRae (Edmonton)

visioning process and implementation strategies. They revealed some of the challenges they face and shared practical solutions, raising awareness about urban issues and the benefits of long-term planning for cities of all sizes.

**Peer Exchange: Focus on the Framework** The PLUS Network hosted a Peer Exchange in Kelowna where participants from Curitiba, Dar es Salaam, Dakar, and Durban heard presentations from Edmonton, Regina and the Niagara Region. The Canadian cities shared strategies on engaging the public, managing volunteers, and coordinating task forces. The Smarter Niagara approach to long-term sustainability planning includes citizen-centered engagement through task forces and uses the Melbourne Principles to facilitate sustainable planning. Edmonton's primary focus is on land-use and mobility planning. In Regina, the City has a long-term record of working across departments, primarily on a project to project or issue to issue basis. The City has four key bodies that bring together multi-stakeholder teams to discuss city planning and development issues.

The Peer Exchange also reviewed a draft paper on the Long-term Planning Cycle which will be further reviewed by the PLUS Network Steering Committee and Members.

**Smarter Niagara Forum – May 10<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup>** The importance of growth management and long-range planning is not lost on Patrick Robson, Director of Community Integration for the Region, and his colleagues in the Niagara Region of Southern Ontario. In an area bounded on three sides by water, including an international border with the United States, growth management just makes sense. With this in mind, the Niagara Region has been promoting Smart Growth for the past several years under the banner of *Smarter Niagara*, including yearly conferences where stakeholders from around the region and across the border meet to discuss the future of the Niagara region. The theme for this year's Smarter Niagara Summit was *Four Pillars for a Complete Niagara: environment, economy, society and culture*.

Robson sees growth as an opportunity and a challenge: *"Niagara's growth is constrained by its limited land base, the preservation of its unique agricultural land, the Greenbelt Plan and by a significant amount of shoreline. The result is that traditional North American assumptions about unfettered growth are simply not reasonable. However, it is with these seeming barriers that real innovations in sustainability planning efforts can take place, and we're seeing that happen now through our emphasis on Smart Growth and overall integrated sustainability."*

## Highlights

**ICSC's Sustainable Agriculture Project wins Award**  
On May 23<sup>rd</sup>, at the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Canadian Awards for

International Cooperation, ICSC's Enhancing Sustainable Dairy Production Capacity project in Cuba won the AMEC Award for Sustainable Development of Natural Resources or Protection of the Environment. The Awards recognize the excellent work of Canadian businesses and organizations in developing countries. ICSC's Cuba project is a farmer-to-farmer project that helped the community of Los Palos become more self-sufficient in milk production. Farming improvements include 30 hectares of rotational grazing pastures, three hectares of grass/legume "pedestals," an area for ration crop development and a small feed mill. The "pedestals" are an innovative Cuban design that mixes legumes and grasses in a rotational pasture setting. This year-long demonstration project has been successful in creating sustainable, on-farm nutrition to replace costly imported cattle feed supplements from the USA, and changed farm management practices to include women in hand-rearing the calves. It now serves as a new, sustainable model for countries in similar climatic zones.

**Upcoming Dialogues** – The web dialogues provide an interactive and informative method for PLUS Network members to communicate with one another about different urban issues. The PLUS Network plans to feature Eco Density and Resiliency in upcoming Web dialogues.

### Report on the Web Dialogue

#### Urban Greening – Where the country landscape meets the city

The marriage of an agriculturist and an urban planner is a special and particular union. While the integration of these two conventional professions may not be obvious, current global population growth trends require integrated thinking and creative solutions about how to use landmass productively. To date, nearly all the land that can produce food is already being farmed. With this in mind, it is no wonder that the last web dialogue featured a lively discussion and interesting examples of initiatives from a number of Network cities and regions.



ICSC Urban Greening Project in Sri Lanka see [www.icsc.ca](http://www.icsc.ca)

The role of community participation was highlighted in this web dialogue. Establishing herb gardens and eco learning centers in schools has allowed some communities to mobilize and make significant changes to their environment, encourage healthy

diets for communities and reduce the amount of community garbage by starting home composting. An example noted in the web dialogue was from Bangkok, where workshops were run to develop green plans for residents who decided to provide an ecological demonstration area for local school children and provide areas to grow vegetables and other foodstuffs.

## Sustainability Highlight

### Zero Waste Challenge in Greater Vancouver

Each year, the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) generates about 3 million tonnes of garbage and recyclables. In 1995, the GVRD developed a Solid Waste Management Plan to reduce the amount of solid waste sent to the landfills and ensure that residual materials are managed responsibly. The plan includes commitments from the federal, provincial and municipal levels of government and resulted in the region reducing its per capita contribution to landfills by 50 per cent of 1990 levels.

In May 2006, the GVRD launched the Zero Waste Challenge with the aim of engaging citizens and helping the region move towards a long-term goal of sustainability. Zero Waste is a philosophy and a design principle. It goes beyond recycling by taking a 'whole system' approach to the vast flow of resources and waste through human society. Zero Waste maximizes recycling, minimizes waste, reduces consumption and ensures that products are made to be reused, repaired or recycled back into nature or the marketplace.

Citizens are key players in the Zero Waste Challenge. About 1/3 of waste that is sent to the GVRD landfill comes from households. Studies show that about half of the GVRD's refuse gets recycled by residents and businesses. With organic waste making up more than 40 per cent of the materials being sent to landfills, natural lawn care, composting and composting yard trimmings are important steps for residents to decrease the amount of material sent to the landfill. Extended Producer Responsibilities (EPR) programs encourage producers and distributors to be concerned with commercial goods at the post-consumer stage.

Several initiatives have been launched in different municipalities as part of the GVRD Waste Management plan (visit <http://www.gvrd.bc.ca/ZeroWaste/index.htm> for a list of ideas and projects). For example, the City of Vancouver implemented a "pay as you throw" program that provides incentive for residents to minimize their waste. Those residents who choose to generate more waste must pay more for service. The City of Vancouver has also converted its fleet of 29 garbage and yard trimmings trucks to run on biodiesel. The Annual Vancouver Landfill

Open House invites the community to see behind the scenes of landfill operations and teaches the public about the landfill's environmental protection system.

The Zero Waste Challenge is an important educational tool that foster participation in waste reduction activities. The Zero Waste Challenge shares responsibility between local government, industry and residents so that everyone becomes accountable for the products they produce and consume.

### Waste-to-Energy

The GVRD's Waste-to-Energy Facility (WTEF) plays an essential role in the GVRD's integrated waste management system. About 20 percent of garbage produced in the Lower Mainland is processed through the WTEF, which turns approximately 280,000 tonnes of garbage into 900,000 tonnes of steam. Part of the steam is then sold to a nearby paper recycling facility, helping to eliminate the use of fossil fuels. The rest of the steam is turned into electricity and sold to BC Hydro. The WTEF is one of the most efficient facilities in North America and the strict environmental monitoring of the facility confirms that it is one of the cleanest of its kind.



Burnaby Waste Facility, GVRD

*We highlight a contribution from a Network Member in each of our newsletters. Please contact Zoe Mullard at [zmullard@icsc.ca](mailto:zmullard@icsc.ca) 604-666-2824 with suggestions for future highlights*

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